



Preaching Resource for National Marriage Sunday – February 8, 2026

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 58: 7-10

Responsorial Psalm 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Matthew 5:13-16

Man and Woman, He Created Them: Together with Purpose

I would like to start this commentary on marriage with a section of the Nuptial Blessing which is imparted during the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage.

It reads: “... *O God, who by your mighty power created all things out of nothing, and, when you had set in place the beginnings of the universe, formed man and woman in your own image, making the woman an inseparable helpmate to the man, that they might no longer be two, but one flesh, and taught that what you were pleased to make one must never be divided; O God, who consecrated the bond of Marriage by so great a mystery that in the wedding covenant you foreshadowed the Sacrament of Christ and his Church; O God, by whom woman is joined to man and the companionship they had in the beginning is endowed with the one blessing not forfeited by original sin nor washed away by the flood...*” (Order of Celebrating Matrimony, no.74).

How many times have we attended a Catholic wedding without paying attention to this blessing? These beautiful words emphasize to what extent God has elevated the vocation of marriage; so much so that, even after all was destroyed by the Flood, the union of man and woman united in God and for God was preserved and, in Jesus Christ, became a path to sanctification for generations to come.

Today, we are observing World Marriage Sunday. Many of you are married, some of you are considering marriage, and some of you have already discerned a different path in life.

Regardless, marriage is the basis on which families are built, and society is founded. It is important for these reasons.

But marriage also teaches us how to serve one another. Those who live out the Sacramental Bond of Marriage have a privileged opportunity to learn how to be at the service of their spouse.

Keeping this in mind, the Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time leads us to meditate upon three elements for those who are discerning a vocation, whether that is to Marriage, the Priesthood or Religious Life. They are charity to those in need, justice in living with others and God, and our witness as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Let us consider first our role as disciples: Are we light and salt for others in our journey of life? Is holiness part of our purpose in life? Is Jesus the center of our existence? Do we serve others willingly?

As disciples of Christ, we accept freely and willingly the love of God in Jesus Christ and put it into practice. This practice is experienced in our relationships with God and our brethren; this is the understanding of "...It is not good for man to be alone...;" and it shows us that it is not as individuals, but as community that we are able to exercise our role as disciples and become light and salt on earth.

This discipleship is also actuated in: "*The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life,*" and which "*is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring*" (Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), no.1601).

Therefore, marriage is not merely a human institution or an invention of the Church; it is part of God's original design. Through Christ's Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection, the bond once broken by Adam and Eve is restored.

The sin of Adam brought pain and death to humanity. Since the Fall, the sacred relationship between man and woman and their purpose in life has been affected by sin. "*Their union has always been threatened by discord, a spirit of domination, infidelity, jealousy, and conflicts that can escalate into hatred and separation.*" (CCC, no. 1606). These evils can be avoided by putting into practice the prophet Isaiah's invitation "... *to share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own...*" (cf. Isaiah 58:7-10).

Already ten years ago, Pope Francis reminded us in his 2016 post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* to be vigilant of the dangers that are affecting the life of the person, the Church, the family, and the sacramental covenant of marriage. Among these dangers, we should be attentive to:

- 1) The de-valuing of life; every life, at every age, must be safeguarded and protected. This especially applies to the most vulnerable, including the unborn, those with disabilities, those who are isolated, and the elderly.**
- 2) New technologies, such as generative AI that can become a replacement for embodied community and human relationships.**
- 3) Consumerism that misleads people into defining their identities by the possessions they own and the experiences they pay for, instead of by their relationships with God and neighbor.**

Many of you, as married husbands and wives, have as your first duty to provide for your spouse and children: materially and spiritually. Carry on faithfully in fulfilling this duty, this service, and this honor of serving your spouses. It is an expression of the enduring love of Christ and a sign of hope for all of us.